



Governors' Termly Newsletter

Summer 2010

This term, the Governing body has continued its work behind the scenes to support the continual success of the school. We have worked very closely with the pre-school to achieve the "new build" bid (work starts on this exciting project over the summer holidays), and very much enjoyed the Grand Opening of the ROHCP project, the culmination of two years hard work by children and staff alike.

We have recently said goodbye to two Governors; Rev Keith Holloway and Mrs Averil Green. Both have given us tremendous support and will be greatly missed. In September we will need to organise an election for a "parent governor" so please watch out for the associated paperwork and make sure you vote!

Governors continue to work with staff on specific areas of the curriculum and play a really important part in the strategic planning for the school. Three Governors report on what we've been up to over the past term.

Becky Poynter, Chair of Governors.

A view from Stuart Hornsby, Chair of Finance and Premises Committee and Governor with responsibility for Science and ICT.

Finance and Premises committee is exactly what it says on the tin! We are fortunate that we have had a 'healthy bank balance' which allows us to see on-going improvements in the fabric of the school, investment in support staff to teachers and in resources for pupils. The main areas for the committee this year have been in ensuring we meet new financial regulations and investment in the pre-school new build.

At Governor visits to monitor Science and ICT, it is evident both subjects are being led in the school by teachers who are passionate about the subjects and both areas have seen investment and improvement. Next year we hope to celebrate science through a science week; in ICT the new term will start with a bank of new laptops to further support the children in their learning.

Catherine Bursell, Parent Governor and member of the Personnel Committee.

As a new member of the governing body I've been made to feel very welcome and I've enjoyed finding out more about how the school is run. As someone with a younger child attending Acorns Pre School I would really like to thank Ms Trappitt and staff for the support and energy they have shown in securing the new building. It will make such a difference to the Pre School children. On that note, Becky and I have discovered a shared love of knitting and have started a knitting club on Friday mornings, so if you fancy learning to knit or learning new techniques let me or Becky know. It's a very relaxed group with tea, cake and chat and several of us have younger children who come along too.

We have decided that to mark Acorn's new home we would like to knit them a 'story time' blanket - if you would like to get involved simply knit 15cmx15cm squares in acrylic (so it's easy to wash) We would like lots of different colours, textures, patterns, pockets etc. We plan on knitting them together when we get back in September. Please drop completed squares off at the school office. Thank you.

From Wendy Moore, Foundation Governor, Chairman of Personnel Committee (from May 2010); also responsible for numeracy and modern foreign languages (Spanish)

Personnel Committee

The main areas of responsibility for this Committee concern the appointment of staff, staff management including staff development, pupil management including child protection, safety and welfare, as well as admissions and policy review.

Rev Keith Holloway (Chairman of this Committee until Easter 2010) retired at the end of the spring term. He enjoyed his wonderful farewell and will treasure the collection of children's work that was given to him as a gift. A team of people from the community are now taking some of the school assemblies. The children all seemed to enjoy the one I sat in on recently, and I hope to attend a few more next term.

As you will know, Mrs Gallagher retires in December, and so we have recently been recruiting a new Deputy Head. Obviously, Mrs Gallagher will be greatly missed, but the Governors feel very positive about the appointment of her successor. We were particularly impressed with the diligent way in which the School Council (made up of two pupils elected from each class) asked questions of the applicants, and of the careful consideration they gave to which applicant would fit best into St Andrew's School. In fact their first choice (by majority) agreed with the first choice of the interview panel; being the successful candidate.

On the staff development side, we are delighted that Mr Drew Quayle is now an Advanced Skills Teacher. It is quite an accolade for the school that two of St Andrew's teachers, Mr Quayle and Mr Hart, do outreach work with other schools to help them improve standards in maths and literacy respectively.

In relation to child protection, there have been a number of very useful training sessions on safeguarding children, during the year, which staff and governors have attended, and the knowledge we have gained has been incorporated into school policies and practice.

Maths

The 2009 Ofsted inspection highlighted the need to make further improvements in maths across the school, especially focussing on improving children's use of a range of calculation strategies. So, as the governor responsible for numeracy, this has been the focus of my monitoring visits, and one of the first things I needed to do was to attend a 'maths calculation strategies' training session myself, held by the school for parents, in the autumn term. (Maths is taught very differently now, from when I was at school many decades ago!). Much work has been done by Mr Quayle (maths subject lead) in helping teachers to improve the effectiveness of their maths teaching and their assessment of pupils' progress. My monitoring visits show that all the hard work is paying off and this area will continue to be a priority next year.

Modern Foreign Languages (Spanish)

Some new teaching/learning resource packs for Spanish were obtained this year, which focus mainly on good pronunciation and what life in Spain is like. Teaching staff find that these new resources help them to make learning more enjoyable, and Spanish culture is incorporated into other lessons where appropriate e.g. cooking, learning about Europe, etc.